DEPARTMENT OF STATE 1/22/51

POLICY PLANNING STAFF

PW

This is good background material for discussion purposes. I understand that as soon as the JCS talks have taken place NEA will prepare an NSC paper on the basis of this document, which we will have an opportunity to bring up at one of our meetings. HSV

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY VWOLFJR DATE 5/25/82

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

POLICY PLANNING STAFF

1/3/51

PW

This would be worth discussing at an S/P meeting.

I wonder if the US and UK could not associate Turkey in some way in handling this problem -- despite the "terrible Turk" tradition.

EHB

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MEMORANDUM

TO : The Secretary

VIA : G - Mr. Matthews

THRU : S/S

FROM : NEA - Mr. McGhee

December 27, 1950.

An important memo; there should be plan for defense of the oil fields

SUBJECT: Proposed US Political and Military Actions Required to Assist the Countries of the Middle East in the Defense of the Area Against Aggression.

In the light of present world events, it is believed that more positive US political and military action is required if the Middle East* is to be successfully defended, and the US and its Western Allies are to make war-time use of Middle Eastern oil, bases and manpower.

Justification for Review of Policy

Among the basic elements justifying a review of US policy and actions in the Middle East at this time are:

(1) US actions have not adequately reflected the NSC findings that the defense of the Middle East is "vital" to the defense of the US.

(2) The UK, which has primary responsibility for the defense of the area, lacks both manpower and resources successfully to defend the area and has no plans for defense of the Saudi Arabian oil fields and the Dhahran Air Base.

(3) Loss of the Middle East to the USSR would be a great psychological loss to the free world generally, and particularly to Western Europe and the members of the British Commonwealth who attach special importance to the sea, land and air routes of the area.

(4) Access to Middle Eastern oil is essential to Europe and would be essential to the US in a long war. Russia would never consolidate a European conquest without Middle Eastern oil.

(5) Important naval, land and strategic air routes and bases exist in the area. Dhahran and Wheelus Fields would be put to immediate strike and post-strike use by the USAF, in the event of global war.

(6) If

* "Middle East" in this paper includes the Eastern Mediterranean, Greece, Turkey, Iran, Israel and the Arab States including Egypt and Libya.

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(6) If the West does not participate effectively in defense of the Middle East, it is doubtful that the support of the Middle East countries could be regained after a war. If the US itself does not participate, American prestige in the area would be lost and American firms might not be permitted to resume their oil concessions and other interests following "liberation".

(7) Turkey's fighting power, potentially the greatest in free Europe outside the United Kingdom, could not be effectively realized if Soviet forces surround it from the East and South.

Proposals:

The following proposals seek to maximize, at minimal cost to the US, the will of the people of the area to cooperate with the West in resistance to the USSR; to translate that will into a coordinated indigenous effort to resist the Soviet advance; and, if the area is overrun, to harry and sabotage the invader, to aid downed Allied airmen and to assist in liberation.

The key proposal around which other steps will center is:

> A US decision and unilateral public statement that the US has a vital security interest in the defense of the Middle East as a whole, and that the US, consistent with its obligations under the UN and with our other commitments, is prepared to assist the countries of the Middle East in the defense of the area against aggression.

Within the framework of the overall declaration described above, it is proposed:

(1) To let it be known informally to the governments of each country in the area that an overt Soviet aggression in the area would lead inevitably to global war.

(2) To continue to supply military equipment to Greece, Turkey, and Iran. In the case of Turkey, substantially to increase military supplies as conditions permit, and to consider other forms of assistance, economic and otherwise, as are required to permit Turkey to increase the size of the regular army and to have stand-by equipment for maximum mobilization of reserves. (A separate memorandum on the subject of support for expanded Turkish military strength is being prepared.)

(3) In conjunction with the UK, to embark upon a policy of strengthening the indigenous defense forces in the other countries of the Middle East who will participate in the defense of the area, on the basis of equal-to-equal partnership. If necessary to achieve the cooperation of the Arabs, we should urge the UK to offer to renounce its existing treaty rights in Egypt, Jordan and Iraq, if and when alternative and adequate security arrangements can be made.

(4) To

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(4) To deliver at an early date token amounts of US arms to Middle Eastern states not now receiving them, who will participate in the defense of the area. To advise these states that when supply and global priorities permit, more substantive quantities of arms would be delivered, for needs not met from the UK or other sources.

(5) As proof of US determination, to station at an early date a battalion of US Marines at Dhahran Airfield in defense of the air field and oil fields, as a means of meeting Ibn Saud's needs for American assurances, and for the morale effect upon the Near East generally.

(6) To supply promptly small US [and/or] UK training missions and individual service technicians to states asking for them.

(7) To arrange "show-the-flag" visits by USAF planes and Navy vessels in friendly countries, in agreement with the Governments concerned.

(8) The US, UK and Commonwealth to agree, in conjunction with inhabitants of the area (Turkey in particular) to plan and to attempt to hold as close as possible to the "outer ring" (the Turkish-Iranian mountain line which will protect the maximum defensible area of the Middle East with its oil, manpower, and strategic facilities). The defense of the "outer ring" would thus become the target for which provision would be made in the Allied power build-up, once more pressing needs elsewhere are met.

(9) To establish (for political as well as military reasons) a combined US-UK command structure in the Middle East which would stimulate basic cooperation among the states of the area not now possible through indigenous organizations or groupings such as the Arab League. This structure would not alter the fact that the UK and Commonwealth have primary responsibility for the defense of the area. It would, however, make much more attractive to the Arab States and Israel the establishment of a direct relationship between the US-UK command and the respective military authorities in each country. The US-UK command structure would include the naming of a British Commanding Officer, the naming of a US Deputy Commander and, if possible, the naming of US country advisers or commanders for the combined US-UK structures in Greece, Turkey, Iran and Saudi Arabia. The US Deputy Commander should have a political adviser supplied by the Department. If and when shipping and supply conditions necessitate, the US-UK command structure should have a supply counterpart along the lines of MESC in World War II.

(10) To streamline Washington procedures so that reasonable requests for aid within the capability of the US to supply are met promptly. To the wavering states in the Middle East, delay in action is considered evidence of disinterest: the maxim "he gives twice who gives quickly" is particularly applicable to this area.

(11) Both

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(11) Through technical and economic assistance, both directly and through the UN, to make it clear to the peoples of the Middle East that they as individuals will benefit from the victory of the West; many poverty-crushed Middle Easterners feel that life under the USSR could not be worse than the life they are now leading.

(12) By the early placing of orders for raw materials and manufactures for war purposes (notably in Egypt and Israel), to get such industry as exists in the Middle East behind the Allied war effort and to expand such industry where practicable.

Enclosures:

1. Tab A - "Re-evaluation of US Plans for the Middle East"
2. Tab B - "The Potential Military Manpower in the Arab States and Israel"
3. Tab C - "The Potential Military Manpower in Greece, Turkey and Iran" (in preparation)

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TAB A

RE-EVALUATION OF US PLANS FOR THE MIDDLE EAST

1. US Security Interests in the Middle East

The following US Government policy was approved on November 24, 1947:

> "...The security of the Eastern Mediterranean and of the Middle East is vital to the security of the United States ... In carrying out this policy the United States should be prepared to make full use of its political, economic, and, if necessary, military power in such manner as may be found most effective. ...One of the greatest dangers to world peace may be the failure of the Soviet Union to understand the extent to which the United States is prepared to go in order to maintain the security of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. It should, therefore, be the policy of this Government to make evident in a firm but non-provocative manner the extent of the determination of the United States to assist in preserving in the interest of world peace the security of the area."

Although the Defense Department, or branches of the armed forces, have at times indicated a preference for the designation "critical" rather than "vital", nevertheless the US and UK Joint Chiefs of Staff as recently as October 26, 1950 agreed that "The Middle East in war is of importance second only to Western Europe".

The security interests of the United States in the Middle East* are primarily:

(1) The oil resources of Arabia, Iraq and Iran.

(2) Important naval and strategic and tactical air bases.

(3) Communications and transportation between the West and the Far East.

(4) The political and military importance of the Middle East bridge between the continents of Europe, Asia and Africa.

United States security interests in the Middle East, especially when viewed in their interrelationship with the similar British security interests, involve the region as a whole. For this reason a country-by-

country

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* The term Middle East, as used herein, refers to the Eastern Mediterranean, Greece, Turkey and Iran, Israel and the Arab States including Egypt and Libya.

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country approach is inadequate as a basis for the formulation of area plans and our policies and actions toward any one country must be framed in the light of our objectives with respect to the area as a whole.

2. October Conclusions of US-UK Joint Chiefs

In the October discussions of the US and UK Joint Chiefs, the following conclusions were reached:

US and UK military representatives in the Middle East will be directed to undertake a joint fact-finding review of present capabilities and projected requirements for the defense of the so-called "outer ring". The "outer ring" is anchored on Turkey in the west and runs southeastwards along the Zagros Mountains of Iran, thus embracing most of the Middle East and giving some protection to the oil fields in southern Iran and Arabia. This plan goes far beyond the limited concept of defending the Suez Canal area which the British proposed as the most feasible plan considering probable British and US capabilities in the foreseeable future. It is noteworthy that even the defense of the Suez area is, according to the British, beyond the probable capability of the UK and the Commonwealth and involves a deficit which only US forces, particularly air forces, can meet.

Noting that there is "growing evidence pointing toward the requirement for at least a portion of the Middle East oil throughout the war", the US and UK Chiefs concluded that further study should be given to this question. Present US planning is based on the assumption that Middle East oil would not be essential for the Allied war effort for the first two war years of a global war. Should the study ordered by the US and UK Chiefs reveal that some Middle Eastern oil is indispensable throughout the war, US plans for defense of the area would have to be altered significantly. In this connection Soviet and European oil resources are so limited that the USSR could not consolidate a victory in Europe without Middle Eastern oil.

3. Disparity between US planning and US Interests

The US Joint Chiefs informed the UK Joint Chiefs in October 1950 that the US "will be unable to commit forces to /the Middle East/ during, at least, the first two years of war." In view of the limited British capability in the area and the limited defensive capabilities in being on the part of the countries of the area, this statement clearly implies that the United States contemplates the abandonment, without even a token defense effort, of most if not all of the Middle East in time of global war.

The JCS decision rests, of course, on the unpleasant fact that United States capabilities are inadequate to protect our vital interests everywhere at the same time; the Middle East has been written off reluctantly

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in favor of theaters of higher priority. Since last October, however, major changes have occurred in the world situation: the rate of US build-up has been increased; organizational progress has been achieved in Western Europe and the chances of the Middle East remaining tranquilly on the side of the West without some practical evidence of Western interest have greatly declined.

No one will challenge the fact that plans to abandon the Middle East fail to provide for our security interests there; we believe that a re-evaluation of our Middle East plans is called for in the light of the US program for increased military stature and preparedness.

The present unfavorable trends in the world arise according to NSC 68/2 "from the inadequacy of current programs and plans rather than from any error in our objectives and aims". In the development of adequate programs and plans a balance must be maintained between global and regional plans and between areas of differing priorities. "Commitments in one area must not be permitted to jeopardize capabilities to act in other areas. Anxiety for the general position must not prevent adequate actions in particular situations." (November 10 draft of Annex 8 to NSC 68/1)

Abandonment of the Middle East without defense in time of war cannot be justified on the ground that the USSR and its satellites have the capability through an all-out effort to occupy the entire Middle East. By such reasoning the United States would not be justified in defending the Japan-Ryukyus-Philippine chain of bases in the Western Pacific, part or all of which the USSR and Communist China could either neutralize or occupy through an all-out effort in time of war. Instead, our plans should be based on our estimate of the probable effort which the Soviets are likely to exert in the area and on our judgment as to the extent to which our interests in the area justify the commitments which may be necessary to deter or defeat the estimated Soviet effort. NSC 68/1 states that the Defense Department, in determining military requirements, has proceeded on the basis that "the US should have a military strength sufficient to meet two fundamental obligations: (a) Protection against disaster; (b) Support of our foreign policy". In weighing what military action may be required for survival itself, account must be taken of the disastrous effect which the abandonment of the Middle East without an effort at defense would have upon the political position of the United States in its relations with the peoples of the Middle East in the post war period. The likelihood cannot be ignored that, even in advance of war, the inevitable knowledge of the Middle East peoples that the US plans to abandon them can, under an intensified Soviet war of nerves, cause political deterioration and defection throughout most of the Middle East with world-wide political repercussions.

It is our belief that a small fraction of the total US military production and manpower can, if properly applied, produce results far out of proportion to the magnitude of the effort expended.

4. Disparity

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4. Disparity between US and UK Planning

In the Middle East the US and UK have similar security interests. All the more striking, therefore, is the absence of any similarity between US and UK plans for the protection of their interests in the Middle East. UK plans, in spite of heavy commitments in other areas, call for the commitment of British forces to defend part of the Middle East. US plans envisage no commitment of American forces to the Middle East for at least the first two years of war. This disparity between US and UK plans had some justification under the World War I concept of British primary responsibility for the defense of the area. Now, while UK plans envisage (and US plans endorse) British defense of the Suez area and protection of the Iranian oil fields in which British interests are paramount, neither US nor UK plans call for -- nor would we probably consider desirable without US local command -- British defense of Dhahran Air Field and the oil fields of Arabia in which American interests are paramount.

5. Important Factors in Re-Evaluation of Plans

In addition to the factors noted above there are other important reasons why our Middle East plans should be reappraised. To follow the time-honored assumption that the US can rely upon the UK to defend the Middle East is to indulge in wishful thinking: British capabilities are too small to be a sound basis for the defense of the US interests in the area. The military weakness of the UK is well known throughout the area; this adversely affects the political position of the UK in negotiating with local governments regarding key defense facilities in the area. Most local governments, if they had to choose, would prefer to rely on American rather than British aid; alternatively, they would much prefer joint US-UK support.

There are two important post-war consequences to be considered in connection with our present plans. First, if our total oil requirements for a global war of several years duration were to be obtained solely from Western Hemisphere sources, the over-production of the oil wells would damage the fields so as to delay significantly, if not preclude resumption of normal production in the post-war period. Second, if the British alone put up a token resistance in defense of the Middle East and the protection of the oil fields of Iran while the US withdrew after demolition of the oil fields in Saudi Arabia without firing a shot, the local political reactions might be so adverse to the US as to severely handicap American re-entry into the area and to give the UK a strong commercial and political advantage in their post-war relations with the local governments. The peoples we plan to abandon in war are the same peoples we must continue to work with upon liberation and in the post-war period, when access to local resources and facilities would have to be re-negotiated in an adverse atmosphere.

The protracted debate between the State and Defense Departments and among the three branches of the armed service over the issue of whether

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the Middle East is "vital" or merely "critical" for purposes of US strategic planning has an interesting sidelight. The position of the Defense Department is motivated in part by two tactical considerations. In the first place, Defense hopes that by adopting a lower priority for the area than the British do, the result will be that the UK will exert itself to do more for the defense of the Middle East than would otherwise be the case. In the second place, the priority assigned to the Middle East substantially affects the inter-service competition between the branches of the armed services for their quotas of the military appropriations. Thus, if the Middle East is deemed "vital" and ground forces are committed to its defense, the Navy would require very considerable equipment and facilities to supply and defend the sea and air lanes on which such ground forces would be dependent. Such an increase in the Navy's share of appropriations would be at the expense of the other service branches.

Whatever role these tactical considerations may play in relations between the US and UK or among the US armed services, it is obvious that they must not be mistaken for the principles which should govern US strategic planning.

6. Direction of Re-Evaluation

We believe that a re-evaluation of US plans in relation to the Middle East is urgently required in connection with the accelerated military build-up in which the United States is now engaged.

The direction of such a re-evaluation should be, in our judgment, away from the concept of primary British responsibility and toward the concept of combined US-UK responsibility and active US-UK cooperation in the development and implementation of plans.

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I. Available Manpower in the Near Eastern Area.

The Arab states (Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Yemen) contain about 40,000,000 people. Approximately 9,000,000 are males between the ages of 15 and 49 of whom 4,430,000 would be physically fit for military service under Western standards. Israel's population is about 1,056,000. 342,000 of these are males between 15 and 49 of whom 255,000 are physically fit for military service. *

II. The Conditions and Attitudes of the Near Eastern People.

Literacy and living standards are low among the larger part of the Arab population. Certain areas such as Yemen are quite backward. The morale of the people differs in the several Arab states. However, it cannot be considered high at the moment, although its potentialities are good. The Arab populations have, in general, a common language, religion, heritage, culture, and similar problems. For the most part the Arabs, particularly the governmental leaders, have a hands antipathy towards communism, although communism could make inroads among the poorer classes. However, while the Arab is fundamentally more inclined toward the West, his feelings are colored by his opposition to imperialism and his dislike of the policy of the West (particularly the United States) on Palestine.

Israel has a higher standard of living and literacy than the Arab states. The morale of the people is high. The economy of the country is precarious, however. The people are for the most part of European extraction and differ greatly from the peoples of the surrounding Arab states in temperament, outlook, energy and approach to their problems. Their approach is essentially western, although it has not as yet been possible to detect any deep friendly attitude toward the West.

III. The Military Potentialities of Near Eastern Manpower.

A. The Arab has had little chance during the past 30 years to demonstrate whether or not he can be molded into an effective fighting man. Prior to the end of the first World War, people of Arab stock had demonstrated from time to time over the centuries a capacity to perform military service in a competent and efficient manner under most arduous conditions. Since 1919 there has been little real effort made to build up strong, well-trained and well-equipped military units in the Arab states except for the development of the Arab Legion and the Transjordan Frontier Force in Jordan by the United Kingdom. However, during World War II almost a million people were used for activities in support of the military. This constituted an important source of support manpower. Nevertheless, there has been a lack of competent military leadership throughout the Arab world. Training facilities have been almost non-existent. Governments have been beset by internal bickerings and lack of experience. On the other hand, it would be possible to mold an effective fighting unit in each of the Arab states or among the states as a whole, provided: (1) The peoples of Arab states believe they are striving for something basic and real to their families, homes and countries;

(2) the

* See Appendix "A"

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(2) the government and peoples of the Arab states feel that they are being treated as partners and not as pawns; (3) competent leadership and training is provided and (4) equipment and materiel are supplied as they become available. It is generally agreed that the absence of training, leadership, materiel and cooperation was the cause of the Arab debacle in Palestine. Jordan clearly indicates that military units can be built up. It would take time, but JE believes that within a two-year period much could be accomplished.

B. Israel stands in contrast to the Arab States. There is a higher proportion of trained manpower of military age in Israel, much of which was trained by the UK or in Central European armies. Though far less in number than in the Arab states, the manpower of Israel could be more quickly developed for military purposes. A political problem of first magnitude would exist in the deployment of Israeli forces in other parts of the Near East. Israel would need materiel and probably some training assistance. Just as in the Arab states, the people must understand that from their participation in an allied effort they would be fighting for things which are essential to their survival. There is little evidence that there is any general realization of this in Israel as yet.

IV. The Use of Military Manpower.

The best methods of using military manpower would be (1) to stimulate the effective buildup of armies in the friendly countries and (2) to develop units for support purposes, labor battalions and the like. The training of foreign units to serve with our troops might be the next best alternative. It would not be desirable to establish a Foreign Legion under American leadership. The development of a Foreign Legion in the Arab world would probably be difficult because of (a) the bad connotation of the concept of a Foreign Legion (i.e., French Foreign Legion in Arabic North Africa) and (b) the lack of something national in its composition. Under present circumstances Arabs would make good mercenaries. The admission of volunteers to our Armed Forces is not as satisfactory as the building up of armies in individual countries or the area as a whole. The difficulties of adjustment are too great. Finally, it is possible that the potentialities of the Arab world and Israel might well be realized by the development of collective forces under the UN Uniting for Peace Resolution.

V. Political Considerations Involved in the Use of Near Eastern Manpower.

The United States' prestige in the Arab states of the Near East, while probably not as low as it was in 1947 and 1948 is nevertheless not as high as it was in 1945. In Libya and Israel our prestige is still fairly high.

The NSC has stated that the area is of critical importance to the security of the United States. The strategic location of the Near East, the importance of the vast oil reserves and the value of the bases in Tripoli, the Cairo-Suez area, Dhahran and Iraq are recognized.

The Near Eastern nations are at a point of decision as to whether to cast their lot irrevocably with the West, to remain neutral or to drift into the Soviet orbit.

At the present time any decision to make more use of Near Eastern manpower must take into account the fact that for the time being there would have to be separate programs for Israel on the one hand and the Arab states on the other.

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The development of the use of manpower in the Arab states might well have a beneficial effect in other parts of the Moslem world, i.e., Pakistan, Iran, etc.

If the United States and the Western nations could clearly demonstrate now to the Near Eastern nations our interest in their survival, it is believed that we could align them with the West against the communist threat and that the manpower resources could become of increasing value over the next several years. If, however, there is no real interest demonstrated in the fate of the Near Eastern peoples, the area with its manpower potential may be lost to the West for many years to come.

VI. Conclusions:

A. There exists in the Near East military and quasi-military manpower potential which would be of great value to the United States.

B. This manpower potential, to be effective, will require leadership, training and equipment.

C. Before use can be made of the manpower the Near Eastern states will want to be sure that:

(1) the Western nations are really interested in their survival;
(2) the Western nations will treat the Near Eastern states as partners and not as lackeys;
(3) help in the form of training and equipment, etc., will be made available over a period of time, and
(4) in the post-hostilities period, should war come, the wishes and views of the states will be taken into full account.

D. If the West does not demonstrate an interest in the fate of the Near East, the manpower potential of the area and the position of the West (oil wells, bases, cultural institutions, etc.) may be irretrievably lost for many years to come.

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APPENDIX "A"

THE MILITARY MANPOWER POTENTIAL OF THE NEAR EAST

Country	Total Population	Males Age 15-49	Males Physically Fit
Egypt	19,218,000	4,755,000	2,390,000
Iraq	4,994,000	1,050,000	500,000
Jordan	365,000	80,000	40,000
Lebanon	1,126,000	200,000	100,000
Saudi Arabia	6,000,000	1,380,000	650,000
Syria	3,110,000	500,000	250,000
Yemen	3,500,000	800,000	400,000
Libya	1,100,000	250,000	100,000
	39,413,000	9,015,000	4,430,000
Israel	1,056,000	342,000	255,000
	40,469,000	9,357,000	4,685,000

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